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S.F. Examiner ☆ Thur., Feb. 5, 1976

Changing habit from heroin to helping

By James Schermerhorn

Marie Duckett was a heroin addict mainlining $250 a day into her system when she first heard the Rev. Jim. Jones speak at his Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ.

She had pleaded guilty numerous times to petty theft, to felony petty theft and to felony possession of dangerous drugs. She had spent time in prison.

Heroin ran her life and she hated it.

"I tapped him (Jones) on the shoulder when he came down the aisle," she said. "I told him, 'I need your help.'"

Jones says, "I saw her desperation . . . She looked 45 . . . I thought she was mentally broken. I wondered if she could recover."

He took her to his home, a farm operated by the church 10 miles outside of Ukiah, with his wife and eight children.

That was more than three years ago. She has not been near heroin since.

She has been living in a church home either in The City or at the farm in Ukiah. Her four children are here, and are cared for with the church's help.

She has worked for various agencies treating drug addicts, at local hospitals as a nurses' aide, and at her studies.

Marie today looks her 31 years. She is strong and healthy.

The promise is there — if she doesn't have to go back to prison.

Ironically, her past caught up with her because of her work for the church.

The church board wanted to send her to Guiana, to help operate its experimental farm project.

When she was asked to go, Marie was forced to admit she was a parole violator because she had not been reporting to the California Rehabilitation Center, a state prison where she was sent as a heroin addict in 1969.

There is an unresolved petty theft charge, and violation of probation on other offenses, as well, she said.

She said she was sure to be caught if she applied for a passport, and the church would be "embarrassed," Jones said.

But Jones and his church are not embarrassed, and they want to help her.

Gene Chaiken, who volunteers his service as an attorney for the church, — where her troubles with the law occurred — went to Southern California to learn the details of what she faces. It could mean as long as nine years in prison, he said.

Marie, once a movie extra and a dancer, was an addict for five years. It began when the man she lived with began stealing money she had saved to attend nursing school. She learned he was buying heroin with it.

"I was 22, and dumb. He was a brilliant man and I still don't know why he took heroin.

Marie Duckett's future is promising — if she doesn't have to go back to prison.

Examiner Photo by Seymour Snider

"But one day I put out my arm. I said, 'We share everything else, we might as well share this.'"

She left nursing school and the career she wanted.

Then her common-law husband was sent to prison, leaving her in the world of addicts, thieves, prostitutes and pushers.

He left her only one thing: Heroin addiction.

Marie is going to turn herself in before a Superior Court judge in Los Angeles tomorrow. It was her decision.

At her side will be Los Angeles attorney Robert L. Winslow, a former Superior Court judge in Mendocino County who is donating his services.

Jones will be there, too. He hopes, on the basis of her record with the church, she may be released into his care.

"When someone is rehabilitated in our program, I know it. She is one of these," he said.

He is ready to describe the things she has done here — from the most tedious volunteer tasks to the study of engines, farm equipment and various sciences.

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JAILING OF NEWSMEN PROTESTED ON COAST

10 Busloads of Church Members From San Francisco Picket Courthouse in Fresno

By WALLACE TURNER
Special to The New York Times

(Excerpted from New York Times article which included a photo of the demonstrators.)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. Sept. 10:

Ten busloads of demonstrators from an activist church in a depressed district here will picket the Fresno County Courthouse around the clock this weekend to protest the jailing of four newsmen on contempt of court charges.

"We feel that the Judeo-Christian tradition's most prominent concern is freedom," said the Rev. Jim Jones, 44 years old. "Where the spirit of God is, there's liberty. We've always been very freedom-conscious."

Two Fresno Bee editors and and two reporters were jailed Sept. 3 in an attempt to make them tell the court how they gained access to secret grand jury testimony in an investigation of civic corruption. No public outcry has arisen in Fresno about the treatment of the local paper's staff.

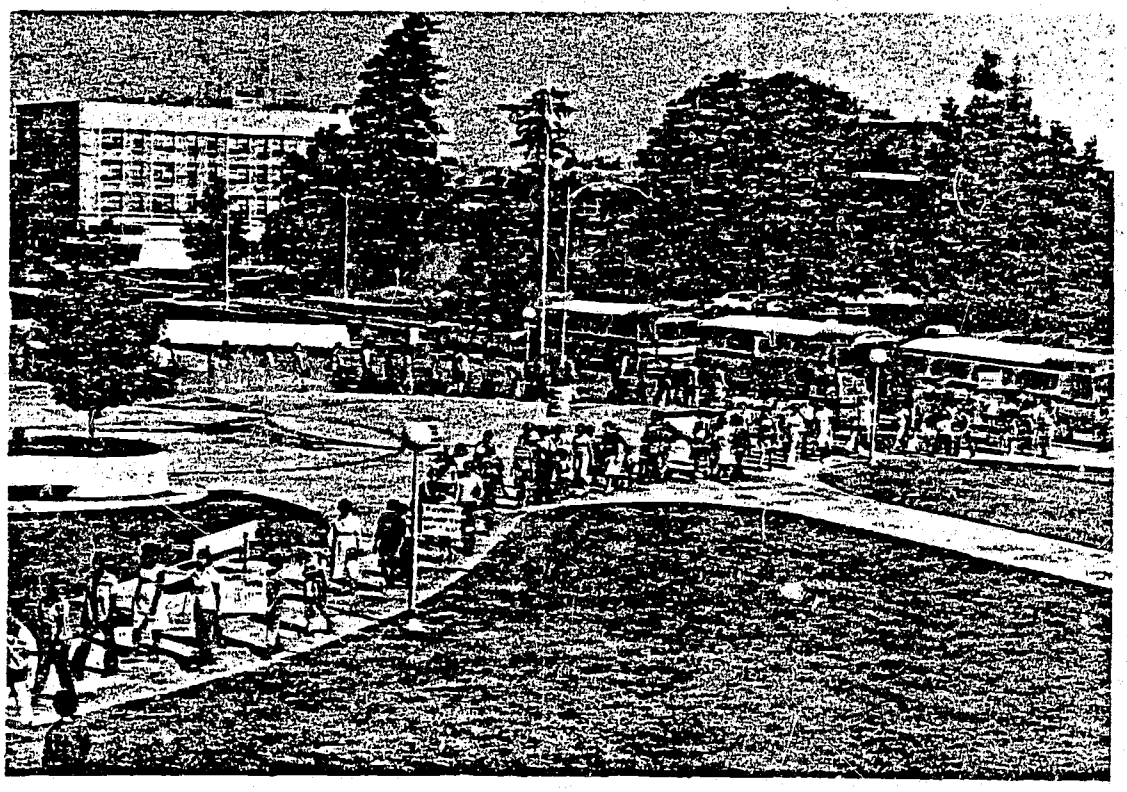
Apathy Scored

Mr. Jones, the pastor of the San Francisco church group picketing here, said, "The apathy is appalling. Either it's that or despair. I don't know what to make of it."

He said the pickets walked all night and planned to continue until early Sunday. As they marched, they polled passersby.

"Teachers and social workers had wholesome attitudes," Mr. Jones said. "Some of the lawyers have been more sympathetic to the court's attitude. The most understanding people that we meet are the Chicanos. They hear of things in Mexico City that make them worry about this."

"I was a missionary in Brazil, and I saw a coup d'etat," he said, "and the people there were less apathetic than I think we are at this stage in American life. This is not just the press's battle. The least we could do is stand out here and walk."



Members of the Peoples' Temple Church of San Francisco picketing the Fresno County Courthouse.